

# MEETING RECORD

## Citizen Advisory Committee Meeting November 4, 2014

**CAC in Attendance:** Gure Ali, Lisa Cote, Adam Dow, Peter Flanders, Kelli Aiken Flynn, Belinda Gerry, Joe Gray, Rob Kilgore, Adam Lee, Steve Letourneau, Tom Poulin, Doris Russell, Theresa Smith, Judy Webber and Rick Whiting

**Consultants:** Sarah Curran

**Staff:** Reine Mynahan and Lori Lewis

**Guests:** Steve Johndro and Melissa Dunn

### **Welcome:**

Committee Chair Adam Lee welcomed everyone back to today's meeting.

### **Minutes:**

Review the meeting minutes of October 21, 2014

**Motion:** by Judy Webber to approve the minutes of the meeting on October 21, 2014.

2<sup>nd</sup> by Rick Whiting

**Vote: 15-0-0** in favor, motion carried.

### **Introductions:**

CAC member introduced themselves as there were new members present at that were not at last week's meeting.

### **Discussion of Prior Meeting Comments:**

Reine Mynahan went over some of the concerns from the last meeting with the CAC members.

- CDBG Low income limits; Reine gave a handout of the Department of Housing and Urban Development income limits
- CDBG Rent Restrictions; there is a rent cap for loans assisted with federal funds for one year after the final inspection
- Urban Conditions Study; Reine explained how target areas are defined
- Map of Absentee Landlords; Reine presented maps of the three target areas that shows properties where the tax bill is sent to a different address/presumably these are absentee landlords.
- Crime Data by Target Area; Tom Poulin and Reine presented the 2011-2013 data of crimes in the target area verses the whole City.
- Access to Capital for Landlords; Adam Dow gave a presentation on lending industry trends, requirements to obtaining financing, and current financing terms.

### **Questions/Comments:**

1. *How often does a municipality recalculate the Fair Market Rent System?*

*Response: This is determined by the Department of Housing and Urban Development based on current housing data.*

2. *What is the population density of the Target areas regarding the crime data?*

*Response: Reine will investigate.*

3. *What do we have to do to get banks to loan to people buying in Auburn?*

### **Owners and Renters:**

Sarah Curran gave a presentation on Owner and Renter Affordability in Auburn. Rents and home values are lower in the Lewiston and Auburn area than in neighboring communities. Lower costs should equal more affordable housing but incomes are also low. Not only are the mortgage costs high but there is the additional burden of high taxes. There is a high poverty rate in the Auburn target areas which makes it difficult to rent or own a home.

Sarah also gave an overview of the 2013 Fair Housing Report;

- Recommendation of educational workshops for renters and landlords.
- Helping to increase the stability of family when poverty levels are increasing.
- Help the language and cultural barriers between landlords and New Americans.
- Try to fix disability related housing complaints.

### **Questions/Comments:**

1. *There is a need to bring home finances to the Muslims population.*

*Response: The City is working with Community Concepts to offer a local program.*

2. *How is the poverty level determined?*

*Response: It is in the range of 50% of area median income.*

### **Other Presenters:**

Steve Johndro from Green and Health Homes Initiative (GHHI); is a collaboration of local and state agencies that is dedicated to breaking the link between unhealthy housing and unhealthy families. Lead poison rates in Auburn/Lewiston are 3 times the rate of other parts of the State which leads to higher number of asthma hospitalizations and higher number of missed school days and/or work days. GHHI is working on becoming a single intake system, comprehensive interviews and working one on one with families.

Melissa Dunn from Neighborhood Housing League talked about:

- Teaching and empowering tenants
- Code enforcement; need stronger documentation and support
- Referrals from General Assistance; can we not use absentee landlords
- Having a landlord registration for accountability purposes; need to know our landlords better

Rick Whiting spoke on the demand for affordable housing and applicant demographics:

- There are a fixed number of vouchers each year for housing
- There are more applicants than households available with a slow turnover rate
- Auburn Housing Authority made the choice to do inspections every year; government only required to do every two years.
- Demographics are changing
- More concentration of Section 8 in the target areas with a few outside of the areas.
- When renters have problems they call AHA and AHA sends someone out to inspect the property.

### **Committee Discussion:**

1. How do we break out of the low-income cycle?  
*Reponse: Identify landlords that are good to tenants. And find better standards.*
2. Code Enforcement needs to be better with no break downs between findings and enforcement.
3. Generational poverty is an issue; low income parents having low income children.
4. Lack of education
5. Landlords are disillusioned/what can we do to allow higher rents to allow for investor reinvestment.
6. Identify the right people to invest
7. Hold landlords to a standard
8. Establish standards to help improve values
9. Effective use of CDBG for those who are low income
10. Include Code Enforcement in discussions

### **Adjournment**

Respectfully submitted,

Lori Lewis  
Community Development Assistant